

Historical Land Uses: County Boundaries in 1921 and 1990
And Livestock Populations between 1900 and 1990

Learner Outcome

The learner will

- Assess the impact of livestock populations on vegetation in southern New Mexico.
- Define the role of plants in soil erosion and flooding.
- Compare the characteristics of past and present Chihuahuan Desert grasslands in southern New Mexico.

Background

Between statehood in 1912 and 1921, six new counties were created from the eight that existed in 1900. Socorro, Grant and Dona Ana County boundaries were modified to create Catron, Hidalgo and Luna Counties; and Guadalupe, Chaves, Eddy and Lincoln County boundaries were modified to create Lea, De Baca and Roosevelt Counties.

Since 1949, there have been only two significant county boundary changes in northern New Mexico. During World War II the federal government acquired exclusive jurisdiction of portions of Santa Fe and Sandoval Counties and created an atomic research laboratory site. In 1949, the Federal government returned the administration of this land area to the state of New Mexico, and the state created Los Alamos County. In 1981, Valencia County boundaries were modified to create Cibola County. Valencia County currently occupies approximately one-fourth of the eastern portion of the original Valencia County, while Cibola County, in the western portion of the original Valencia County, includes most of the original county area.

Materials

- Supplement numbers 2.15 through 2.29
- Overhead projector
- Marking pen
- Calculator
- Graph paper
- Ruler

Assessments

- Worksheets

Activity #1
Recent County Boundaries and Land Productivity
2 class periods

Procedure

The teacher will

- Discuss facts in the *Background* section.

- Ask and discuss the questions listed in the above supplements.
- Work with students to determine how numbers were obtained and require that students prepare graphs to illustrate trends in different livestock species.